

Bangladesh Election

Ruling Awami League's 'Massive Victory' Has Its Shady Side

Fourteen months after the emergence of a national bourgeois State at the cost of tremendous sacrifice of the working people there, the first parliamentary election was held on 7th of March last in Bangladesh. In the said election there are strong grounds to suspect if there was any fair poll at all.

The National Assembly of 300 members has an opposition of a total strength of 8 only—one each from three opposition parties, including Sri Ataur Rahaman, only prominent member among the opposition and 5 other independent members. Maulana Bhasani's NAP has not even a token representation in the Assembly. It is indeed a great blow to all expectations about the emergence of a sizable parliamentary opposition after the poll, which was deemed to be essential as a powerful check on absolute monopolisation of political power by the ruling party in this new State.

That Mujib, the 'national hero' usurping all the credit of the national liberation movement for himself and his party, thanks to the propaganda services of the Press, Radio and all other media not only of Bangladesh but even of some foreign States

Ashok Roy

including the Indian State, would sweep the poll, was a foregone conclusion. But the electoral results speak not only of a sweeping victory of Awami League but something beyond that.

Even the habitually 'hero-worshipping' Indian journalists of the bourgeois newspapers could not deny that: "there can be no doubt that the ruling party has shown little hesitation, in making use of the administrative machinery. Helicopters, obtained from abroad for relief operations, carry Ministers on election tours; the Government-controlled radio and television make little effort to be politically neutral; even some of the leading newspapers seem to have been pressed into the

ruling party's service. Altogether little distinction is being made between the Government and the party"

(Amalendu Dasgupta's pre-poll report, **Statesman** dated 3.3.73)

And it is no longer unknown to the world that terror tactics in the crudest forms let loose on the opposition parties reached such a height that 50 political murders took place in a single week and at one stage, all the opposition parties threatened to boycott the election.

True, Mujib still retains his image of a 'national hero', of a 'Messiah', so to say, over the masses. And this simple factor was the greatest asset for his party. True, the opposition parties were in disarray in absence of a united front, had limited resources and were without any clear-cut common democratic programme for the poor masses to rally behind. But can this, in anyway, justify the throttling of democratic parliamentary norms and principles by a ruling party in the election?

After the poll, the opposition parties and democratic-minded individuals seem to be unanimous in holding that the 'massive victory' of the ruling party has its shady side of a 'massive operation of electoral malpractices, right from the preparation of electoral rolls and electioneering campaign down to the casting of votes and even declaration of election results'. They are of the opinion that to say the least, elections in 70 constituencies were totally "rigged".

From the various reports, it is now obvious that the
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Observe 25th Anniversary of SUCI on 24th April

Central Committee's Appeal to All State Units

The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Centre of India has issued the following appeal on the august occasion of 25th anniversary of the Party.

"On 24th April next, we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of our Party.

"To observe this historic day of revolutionary significance to the toiling Indian millions with all solemnity and gravity, the Central Committee directs all the State units to organise elaborate programmes of meetings, squads, group meetings, street-corner meetings, literature sale campaign, poster and poster exhibitions and fund collection campaign to carry out the revolutionary teachings of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the leader, teacher and General Secretary of our Party and one of the greatest Marxist-Leninist philosophers of the present era, among the workers, peasants, students, youths and women, among every section of the toiling millions of our country.

"We are glad to announce that on this auspicious occasion, the West Bengal State Committee of our Party has organised a central meeting on the day at the Saheed Minar Maidan, Calcutta, at 5 p.m. where our beloved leader and teacher, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, will be the main speaker.

"We urge upon the toiling masses of all walks of life to come forward in thousands to make the occasion a grand success."

Lakhs join Anti-unemployment Mass Squatting at Calcutta

Under the auspices of 26 mass organisations, lakhs of people participated in the programme of squatting on 28th March before the Raj Bhavan in Calcutta to raise their demand for employment or, failing it, unemployment allowance for all unemployed persons.

This mass squatting was organised to voice the protest of the people against the misrule of the Congress Government and to mobilise support of all sections of the democratic people on the demand of (i) jobs or unemployment benefit for the unemployed; (ii) stopping immediately eviction of peasants and restoration of the lands from which

they have been evicted; (iii) immediate curbing of the price of essential commodities and arrangement of adequate supply of food stuff and (iv) putting an end to the terror and repression and restoration of trade union and democratic rights fully.

It has also been announced from this rally that similar mass squattings would be
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Maintain Unity and Solidarity of the Left Front

Some Questions Concerning CPI(M)'s Attitude Regarding RSP's Decision to Join Rigged Assembly

After the RSP's decision to join the rigged Assembly, some questions centering round the present and future line of action of the CPI(M) are agitating the public mind. It is being asked "what will be the next step of the CPI(M)? Will the CPI(M) also join the rigged Assembly in an opportune moment? What is the future of the Left Front? Is the CPI(M) really serious to build up the Left Front as an instrument of the left and democratic movement?" These are some of the urgent questions that are agitating the public mind.

There is every reason for such doubts in the public mind regarding the attitude of the CPI(M). Both the CPI(M) and RSP agreed that the last election in West Bengal was completely rigged; but lately, a surreptitious shift in their attitude was being observed. The CPI(M) leader Mr. Jyoti Basu wrote a book—"Rape of democracy in West Bengal" describing in it how the Congress, in league with the administration, rigged the entire election in West Bengal. But it was seen that the same Mr. Jyoti Basu was crediting the Congress, at Chandigarh, with the creation of a radical atmosphere in the country to the extent that the extreme right reaction was cornered. Thus the CPI(M) leader did not consider the Congress as a right reactionary force. It is implied from his statement that the rigging was only partial and the progressive image of the Congress played a role as a result of which a considerable section of the people supported it.

Mr. Jyoti Basu's assessment as made to the reporters during the session of the Central Committee of the CPI(M) at Chandigarh, regarding the victory of the Congress-CPI alliance in the last election was as follows:

"The victory of Congress CPI alliance and the rout of the rightist forces in the election of 1971 and 1972, was a gain for socialism to the extent that a climate of radicalism was created. It was an advance in a sense that a positive programme

of some radical measures was placed before the country (*The Statesman* dated 8.11.72)

This assessment of Mr. Jyoti Basu was reported in all the newspapers of the country and neither Mr. Basu nor any other leader of the CPI(M) refuted the statement. So it can be reasonably concluded that Mr. Jyoti Basu expressed the stand of the CPI(M) on this issue correctly.

If the statement of the RSP State Committee which was issued in support of their decision to join the rigged Assembly is considered, then a marked similarity in approach between the CPI(M) and RSP will be observed. The RSP also considers that the rigging was partial and the victory of the Congress is due to the failure of the left parties to correctly fight the Congress politics of utilising the Bangladesh issue and Indo-Pak war for its petty party interest and the Congress took advantage of this failure of the left parties to project a progressive image of the party to the people.

Thus both the CPI(M) and RSP considered that the rigging was only partial and it was due to the progressive image of the Congress, that large section of the people voted for this party. Thus both the CPI(M) and the RSP are practically rejecting the unanimous decision of Left Front that the Congress victory in '72 election was entirely due to total rigging of the poll through the use of the entire administrative machinery.

In the Central Committee meeting at Chandigarh the CPI(M) cited various achievements of the Congress. It was stated—"Congress has taken positive steps, such as seeking economic cooperation of the Soviet Union, amendment of the fundamental rights and creation of radical climate." (*The Statesman*, dated 11.11.72)

This assessment of the CPI(M) regarding the Congress is nothing new. Since 1969 when the Congress was divided, the CPI(M) has been certifying the Indira Congress as progressive compared to the Syndicate Congress. The measure to nationalise banks for protecting the aggregate interest of the monopoly capitalists was hailed by the CPI(M) by such terms as "a progressive measure", "a step forward" etc. and the CPI(M) concluded that a "healthy anti-monopoly trend" was developing within the ruling Congress. And at Chandigarh, the CPI(M) eulogised 'the positive achievements' of the Congress in no uncertain terms. But the leaders of the CPI(M) never express this assessment of the party in public meetings. On the contrary, it is seen that the CPI(M) leaders characterise the Congress as the representative of the vested interest, the monopolists, reactionaries etc. and call it even semi-fascist. So the people are genuinely confused how the Congress, a semi-fascist and reactionary force can create radical climate and take progressive measures. Such contradictory statements of the CPI(M) has created much confusion in the democratic movement of the country and the ruling party is taking advantage of this.

The people of our country can realise through their day-to-day experience that the Congress has been serving the monopolists in plundering the resources of the country

during the last twenty five years and the intensity of exploitation of the people has been much aggravated during the last three to four years during the rule of the present Indira Congress. The grip over the national economy of the monopolists has been firmly established and the democratic rights of the people have been drastically curtailed. The Congress Government has completely destroyed the relative neutrality of the administration and the ground work of fascism has been laid in our country. The Congress is attempting to liquidate the left and democratic forces with the help of armed anti-social elements being actively supported by the police. People can well understand that instead of creating radical atmosphere, the Congress has created an atmosphere of terror so that left and democratic forces cannot function. Under the present circumstances when the democratic minded people genuinely desire that all the left democratic forces should launch united struggle against the fascist onslaught with a firm determination, this genuine desire of the people is thrown into disarray by such double standard of the CPI(M).

That the CPI(M) refrained from issuing any statement condemning the action of Golam Mohiuddin, elected on CPI(M)'s ticket, in joining the rigged Assembly, has deepened the suspicion in public mind that but for the silent approval of the CPI(M) Mohiuddin could not have ventured to join the rigged Assembly.

It is this contradictory stand of the CPI(M) regarding the ruling Congress, that has paved the way to create rupture in the Left Front. And the RSP and Golam Mohiuddin could violate the decision of the Left Front because of the prevailing confusion created by the

RSP Secured Moral Support in CPM's Self-Contradictory Politics

stand of the CPI(M). The CPI(M)'s mild reaction to the RSP's decision and its indiscreet silence over Mohiuddin's decision created a deep impression that the CPI(M) was not actually very serious regarding boycott decision. The 'Satya Yug', a pro-CPI(M) newspaper even justified the reasonings of joining the rigged Assembly and only commented that the RSP instead of taking such an unilateral decision should have acted jointly. Is the 'Satya Yug' preparing the public mind for the future course of action of the CPI(M) ?

When the ruling Congress smothered democracy in the last election in '72 and even after election mounted fascist onslaughts against the left and democratic forces and attempted to liquidate their mass organisations, controlled by the leftist parties, the SUCI, put forward certain concrete proposals to the constituents of the Left Front with a view to launching a broad-based struggle throughout the country for the restoration of democracy. At that time the SUCI proposed that with a view to lodging a strong protest against the smothering of democracy by the Central Congress Government the leftist members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha elected from West Bengal should also boycott along with the boycott of the rigged Assembly in West Bengal. The SUCI firmly held that this type of action would create favourable condition for the struggle for the restoration of democratic atmosphere through the favourable reaction in the mind of the democratic-minded people of not only India but outside India also. At that time the CPI(M) did not accept this proposal on the legalistic ground that since the election held in '71 was not rigged, they would not accept such a proposal.

The question was not

whether the election in '71 was rigged or not; but the mainpoint was whether such a strong protest against the Central Congress Government who raped democracy in West Bengal was highly essential. Since West Bengal is the nerve centre of left and democratic movement, the Congress Government has been attempting to smash the left movement in this State with the hope of smashing democratic movement throughout the country. So the struggle for restoration of democratic atmosphere in West Bengal is interwoven with the question of preserving democracy throughout India. But the CPI(M), guided by certain petty considerations refused to accept the proposals of the SUCI, which were meant to strengthen the struggle for restoration of the democratic atmosphere. The CPI(M) even rejected the suggestion of boycotting even a few sessions of the Parliament. So it is evident that ever since the very beginning the CPI(M) was not serious in building up this essential struggle for the restoration of democratic atmosphere. At that time we cautioned that if the CPI(M), the major party within the Left Front does not play its proper role, the struggle for the restoration of democracy will lose momentum, the public wrath against the total rigging by the Central Congress Government will gradually subside and much confusion and complications will arise within and outside the Left Front. That this analysis of our Party is correct, is proved by the subsequent events. The RSP and Golam Mohiuddin, the CPI(M) supported Independent Candidate, taking advantage of the vacillations of the CPI(M) dared to violate unilaterally the unanimous decision of the Left Front and consequently the image of the Left Front has been lowered and confusion has been created even among

democratic-minded people regarding the justifiability of continuing the boycott.

Under the present circumstances, it is the duty of the CPI(M) as the largest left party to declare clearly its policies for strengthening and consolidating the struggle for the restoration of democracy. This struggle will be greatly damaged if the CPM continues its present confusing and vacillating stand. The present decision of the Left Front to boycott the rigged Assembly is aimed at restoration of democratic atmosphere so that the left opposition parties can play their proper role in parliamentary democracy. For, it is our considered view that though the scope of bourgeois democracy in India has diminished yet it is not yet completely exhausted. And so every Marxist-Leninist party must take full advantage of it to strengthen the democratic movement. This is the reason why every left and democratic party must now unite to launch movement for the restoration of democracy, with a firm determination. It is the genuine demand of the people that the CPI(M), as the largest left party must come out with an unambiguous policy statement that the struggle for the restoration of democracy will continue till the basic causes which make the rigging of the poll possible are removed, administrative neutrality upto the lowest thana level maintained in practice and the left oppositional forces are allowed to function freely. If the CPI(M) firmly declares this policy, the present confusion in the left democratic movement will disappear and the people will again have full confidence in the Left Front.

The attitude of the CPI(M) towards the Left Front is also creating confusion in public mind. The CPI(M) reacted very mildly at the unilateral violation of the decision of the Left Front by the RSP

and after making mild criticism, the CPI(M) appealed to the RSP to build up united movement on the burning issues of the day. The necessity of building up broad based united movement on the basis of certain issues is no doubt important. But it is much more important to strengthen the Left Front,—the most powerful instrument of struggle on the basis of certain programmes and a definite code of conduct. Under the present situation the role of the Left Front is very vital. The present Left Front emerged before the election in '72 to resist unitedly the fascist attacks of the Congress on the leftist forces. This fascist onslaught of the ruling Congress was intensified after the election and is still going on unabated. So the present situation demands that the leftist forces must unite and develop the Left Front as an alternative to the Congress politics for conducting the struggle for restoration of democracy. The necessity of broad basing this struggle by uniting with other forces outside the Front on certain issues is no doubt necessary and very important for strengthening this movement but if the importance of the Front is minimised for this reason only, it will pose a grave danger as it will never be possible to meet the present serious challenge by the Congress. But the people are genuinely concerned that the CPI(M) instead of strengthening the Left Front and developing the image of the Front to a higher level, has shattered this image and is, in reality, developing another loose type of Front.

During the last twenty five years of Congress misrule, the left and democratic forces united many times to meet the challenge of the reactionaries and the vested interest; but in a moment of crisis the major party failed to give proper leadership for

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Congress Bunkum of Stable Governments Exploded

When the ruling Congress party, led by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, put on a radical cloak before the mid-term Lok-Sabha poll in '71 and the Assembly elections in '72, it promised two things to the people—socialism and stable government.

With a sweeping majority secured in these elections—by using whatever means, fair or foul, it could lay its hands on—the ruling Indira Congress firmly grabbed the power and appeared with a look of an invulnerable political force in parliamentary politics at both national and state levels.

But, within a few months, the balloon of 'stable government' has blasted with factional feuds, and group rivalries inside the party and politics of conspiracy against others' governments raising their ugly heads in most of the States, leading to collapse of their own governments on the one hand and toppling of others' on the other hand in different States. A study of this state of affairs will easily prove their highly claimed 'unity' and 'glorious image of Indira Gandhi' to be simply a bunkum.

A. B. Das

ANDHRA

Take, for example, the case of Andhra. Here the Indira Congress was enjoying absolute, single party majority in the Assembly. The ruling Congress was firmly entrenched in administration and had no fear of being toppled by the opposition parties.

Then why the people of Andhra were forced to face the President's Rule?

The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee split up into two groups demanding separate Andhra and Telengana States under the leaderships of Mr. V. Subba Reddy, the former Deputy Chief Minister and Mr. Narasimha Rao, the erstwhile Chief Minister respectively. It was simply their power politics which

dethroned Mr. K. Brahmananda Reddy and installed Mr. Narasimha Rao, thereby creating the first stage of instability of government in the State. It was not all but the first scene of the drama. Conspiracy of power politics grew up again. Most hatefully the Indira Congress leaders of both factions utilized the Mulki Rules issue to fan up the regional and parochial sentiments of the people and ultimately the Narasimha Rao Ministry had to resign and President's rule was imposed on the people of the State.

But that also could not solve the problem or satisfy their group interests as it was inadequate to quench their thirst for power. Both the wings are now demanding bifurcation of the State. Thus they are now trying to achieve their goal—separate ministerial power in the name of fulfilling the popular demand of the masses in Telengana and Andhra regions.

Strangely, though not unexpectedly, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her colleagues, who clamour so vociferously against regionalism three times a day and claim to uphold the cherished ideal of 'national integration', spared no time to swallow their words, when the question of their narrow party interest appeared. And the PM went out half way to meet both the "separatist" factions of the Andhra Congress with an 'open mind'!

So the very nature of tackling the problem by the Central leadership showed how, in their eagerness to save the Congress, they could throw to the winds the real

interest of the people and the country without the slightest prick of conscience.

Their present attitude seems to be like this,—if bifurcation is to come after all, then better let it come as a gift of the Central Congress leadership to the local Congress party.

ORISSA

In Orissa, the case is somewhat different. It is most ironic that the Satpathy Ministry fell just 8 days after the Congress Secretary, Mr. C. Jadav, had claimed that the Orissa Government was very much 'stable' and there was no question of dissolving the State Assembly.

It is the same Ruling Congress which had earlier toppled the three-month-old Biswanath Das Ministry, thereby creating instability, through induction of defectors from the Utkal Congress and the Swatantra Party that has now itself suffered a similar disaster in the same way at the hands of Mr. Biju Patnaik's Pragati Party. The 260 day-old Satpathy Ministry, formed with the support of those who left the Utkal Congress, collapsed on March 1 when that group left again to rejoin their old colleagues. The whole game of filthy floor-crossing politics has been played from a most opportunistic angle by both the sections and they have been rightly served.

But it can not be denied that the Central Congress leadership or rather the Prime Minister and the President most undemocratically imposed President's rule there violating the claim of the opposition to form an alternative Ministry in the State.

In Orissa, the inner party clique and coterie is rampant within the Congress also—even 10 of the 17 MPs from the State have publicly disclosed their lack of confidence in the leadership of Mrs. Satpathy who was virtually nominated by their 'undisputed' leader, Mrs. Gandhi. So, here also it is the Indira Congress,

which had sought votes from the people for Mrs. Satpathy with the high assurance of a stable government just the day before and this is the way it has given Orissa a 'stable' government under the President's Rule.

MANIPUR

While factional feuds and group rivalries within the party brought the downfall of the Congress Governments in Andhra and Orissa, in Manipur, the same Indira Congress in collusion with its underling, the CPI, brought the downfall of the popular ULP Government through its heinous exercise in the filthy game of floor crossing.

Here the Congress-led alliance, the PDA had their blessings from their overlords at Delhi to such an extent that the CRP posted in the State has been fully used to confine MLAs in a heavily guarded camp lest some of them might change their mind to express support for the popular ministry against the foul game of the Indira Congress.

And the Indira Congress, with the backing of the Army, the Administration and the CPI, has at last succeeded in forcing the ruling ULP Ministry to resign. And the people of Manipur also received their 'stable government' from the hands of Indira Congress in the form of President's Rule.

PONDICHERRY

After Manipur, the Indira Congress is trying to repeat the same episode in the Union Territory of Pondicherry by making their stooge, the CPI, play the same dirty trick as they have themselves played in Manipur. And it will not be surprising if the elected DMK Government there gets toppled within a few days. *Because Indira Congress will not allow any non-Congress Government, whatever may be their colour, to exist.*

GUJARAT, MYSORE

In Gujarat and Mysore, their own ministries are also suffering from dissensions within and it will not be

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To Establish Revolutionary Leadership in Left Movement is the Most Vital Task Now

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petty party considerations and the unity was disrupted. Moreover, instead of raising the ideological standard of the cadres as well as of the people, the leading party of the Front relied merely on their blind allegiance. This is the reason why the United Front which emerged as an instrument of struggle of the toiling people was disrupted and even in the present critical situation when the Congress is resorting to fascist attacks on the left and democratic forces, the CPI(M), the major party of the Front has failed to play its proper role for strengthening the struggle for the restoration of democracy.

So the most important and vital question before the left democratic movement in our country is the question of establishing revolutionary leadership which alone can steer the left democratic movement to its logical culmination. The history of the left democratic movement of the last twenty five years reveals to the toiling people of our country that unless the ideological and organisational leadership of a genuine revolutionary party is firmly established, such crisis in the left democratic movements will periodically crop up owing to the non-Marxian outlook of the pseudo-revolutionary forces and so the leftist movement in our country will suffer.

So the people must constantly bear in mind, even during the phase of united movement, that the question of establishing the revolutionary leadership is most vital for strengthening the movement and raising it to an ever higher level.

It goes without saying that the SUCI alone has been providing the correct guiding line through the correct

analysis of the political situation; but this party has not yet been able to acquire the strength necessary to influence effectively over the left democratic movement. So it must be realised that in order to maintain the unity of the left democratic forces, develop and intensify the left democratic mass movement in a correct way, it is historically necessary to strengthen and place the only revolutionary party—the SUCI, in the helm of democratic movements in our country.

CPM-Congress Alliance

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is forged for some petty sectarian interest.

The CPI(M) has never been consistently pursuing anti-Congress policy and in reality has been maintaining a double standard with regard to the Congress. Since the division of the Congress in 1969, the CPI(M) has been evaluating the Indira wing of the Congress as 'progressive' and this position of the CPI(M) has not yet been changed as can be seen from the deliberations in the Central Committee of the CPI(M) at Chandigarh. But in public meetings and statements the leaders of the CPI(M) take tough anti-Congress position to exploit the militancy of the rank and file of the party and term the Congress as reactionary and semi-fascist. The recent alliance with the Congress, which has tacit approval of the CPI(M) leadership, at the Tirur Municipal election, reveals the opportunistic double standard of the CPI(M). Such opportunism is creating confusion in the left and democratic movement of the country. The rank and file of the CPI(M) should seriously ponder over this question and compel the leadership to take consistent stand for the future of the left democratic movement in our country.

CONGRESS BUNKUM

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a matter of surprise if the Governments in question collapse before another general election and President's Rule is imposed upon the people of these two States.

The Congress rift in Gujarat first came into open during the by-election in a Rajya Sabha seat when 10 Congress MLAs voted for the Opposition candidate, Mr. Jaswant Thakur, backed by the Congress (O).

Recently the opponent group of the Congress Chief Minister Mr. Ghanashyamdas Oza, headed by two of his Cabinet colleagues, Mr. Chimanbhai Patel and Mr. Kantilal Ghiya, has launched a signature campaign among the Congress MLAs and it has now posed a threat for

the Oza Ministry as complained by Mr. Oza to the Congress High Command and the Prime Minister. This time also, the Congress President, when asked, replied that 'no question of a change in leadership has arisen'—as the Secretary did in the case of Orissa 8 days before the downfall of the Satpathy Ministry!

Altogether 20 Congress MPs in Mysore, critical of the progress and development programmes in the State resulting in widespread dissatisfaction among the people, declared that they would meet the Prime Minister to bring to her notice the sense of dissatisfaction among the party workers about the role of the Administration and the organisation under the Chief Ministership of Mr. Debraj Urs. (**Statesman**, 17.3.73)

Pakur Stone Quarrymen's Meeting

Pakur, March 25: A massive meeting of more than a thousand stone quarry miners was held here at Khaprajole Labour Welfare Centre ground recently under the auspices of Pakur Quarries Mazdoor Union, affiliated to UTUC (Lenin Sarani). Comrade Ziad Ali Boxi, Secretary of the Union, presided over the meeting.

The main speaker at the meeting, Comrade Pritish Chanda, a member of the Central Committee of the SUCI and Secretary, All India UTUC (Lenin Sarani), in his speech urged upon the quarry miners to build up a strong united movement against the oppression of the employers and to carry forward their struggle under the leadership of the SUCI, the only revolutionary party in India.

Comrade Gayatri Das Gupta, a prominent leader of UTUC (Lenin Sarani), Com. Amin and Com. Mongal Hembram, Adivasi organisers, also addressed the gathering.

Things are now heading for an inevitable rift within the Gujarat and the Mysore units of the ruling Congress which have already made the Governments in these two States quite unstable.

Mass Squatting at Calcutta

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jointly held by these mass organisations on 10th April 1973 in all sub-divisional and district head quarters of West Bengal on the same demands.

The gathering was addressed by Com. Nihar Mukherjee, Jyoti Basu, Jatin Chakrabarty, Shambhu Ghosh, Ram Chatterjee, Debashis Banerjee, Saifuddin Kashmiri and others.

The U. T. U. C. (Lenin Sarani), CITU, UTUC (Bowbazar), KKMf, DSO, PSU, SFI, DYO, DYF, Mahila Sanskritik Sangha and other left mass organisations of workers, peasants, youths, students and women participated in the squatting.

'The Election was Very Badly, Extensively and Shamelessly Rigged'-Badaruddin Umar

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various techniques adopted in rigging the election by the ruling party of Bangladesh bear striking resemblance to those adopted in rigging the General Election of 1972 in West Bengal. Such resemblance was witnessed even to the minute details of such overt methods like armed obstruction to the genuine voters, gun-rattling and grenade throwing, forcible seizure of electoral booths, forcibly letting out the election agents of the opposition parties at the time of polling and counting etc. etc., as was the case in West Bengal during the last poll.

But the question weighing heavily upon the minds of the democratic-minded people in Bangladesh today is that, inspite of an assured majority in the National Assembly through the poll, why the ruling Awami League chose "to dismantle even the pale shadow of parliamentary democracy which, it avows, it is politically wedded to?"

A prominent progressive intellectual of Bangladesh, Mr. Badaruddin Umar has tried to reflect on this question by holding that: "the election was undoubtedly largely rigged. Not only that. It was very badly, extensively and shamelessly rigged....It (the decision by Awami League for rigging-writer, was actually a decision for liquidating the opposition not by any democratic method but by resorting to methods which are contrary to it. And in this there is nothing to be surprised."

(Badaruddin Umar's article in 'Holiday' 18th March '73)

We are, however, constrained to observe that neither the leaderships of different big opposition parties nor the progressive intellectuals of Bangladesh, have, so far been able to provide a correct political analysis of the concrete situation which may work as a valuable guide to the working people there in building up their own

struggle on some concrete urgent democratic demands, like, increasing employment opportunities, thorough agrarian reforms, civil rights, relative neutrality of the administration, secular democratic educational system, freedom of Press, freedom of the political parties, trade unions and other mass organisations to organise public opinion, firm commitment of the Government, not in words but in practice, against communal institutions, trends and forces and maintaining consistent anti-imperialist foreign policy by the Government.

For this, what is needed is not merely a proper assimilation of the real political significance of attainment of state power by the national bourgeoisie of Bangladesh. What is needed more, is to co-relate this major political event with such concrete economic and political measures adopted by the ruling party like taking over the management of industries, banning the right of workers to strike, economic planning, growing trend and tendencies to muffle the voice of the opposition, crude terror tactics like murder of political opponents etc. now being resorted to after gearing up the full governmental machinery by the ruling Awami League. This co-relation can only be done on the basis of a concrete understanding of Marxism-Leninism and its concrete application in the national soil in the background of present day international situation.

Obviously, that is missing. Instead, progressive intellectuals and self-styled 'Marxists' are giving expressions of their bewilderment and political-ideological confusions. The so-called 'Marxists' of Bangladesh Communist Party under the leadership of Sri Moni Singh

have rallied behind Mujib and his party in an illusive search for 'progressivism' like their counterparts on this side of the Ganges. They call those concrete measures as progressive which in fact are aimed at consolidating the aggregate class rule of the bourgeoisie. As such, history bears witness to the queer position of these so-called 'Marxists' who are helping the bourgeoisie to consolidate their rule of oppression, having bid good bye to the working class world outlook and have now almost placed themselves at the service of the bourgeoisie. Almost the same can be said about those political forces who are putting up 'qualified' parliamentary opposition to the ruling party. We mean the Mujaffar NAP people. Although they fought against the ruling party in the election as the strongest among the opposition parties, they did so with the sole intention of sharing a bit of parliamentary power. From class angularity they have not much difference with the ruling party.

We refrain from giving an exhaustive analysis of the different political forces working now in Bangladesh. But suffice it to say that the trends of thinking of left and democratic forces of that country can be broadly divided into two groups. One, representing the 'ultra-left' opinion, have completely failed to grasp the real political significance of the state power passing into the hands of the national bourgeoisie being represented by Mujib and his ruling party. They have, therefore, lost the historic sense and necessity and along with it the political initiative for exposing the bourgeois leadership before the masses, on the sound ideological basis of working class philosophy concretised in the national

soil. They are simply toying with the idea of a revolution without caring for the painstaking historic task of developing democratic movements to its logical culmination. This 'short-cut', attitude and 'slipshod' manner of thinking reflect petty-bourgeois impatience and romanticism which may slip into adventurism entailing with it a deep setback to the revolutionary movements in the country.

The second trend of thinking gives cognition to the fact that "the might of the Awami League which had established itself through the exercise of power and the distribution of loaves and fishes could be countered by nothing short of mass movement, a reality which was understood but not acted upon by the opposition parties." (Holiday dt. 18.3.73)

True, for achieving the relative bourgeois freedom, and civil liberties and establishing the democratic norms people are to be organised in united mass movements. The ruling party is to be arrested on its formal commitment to secularism, democratic principles and anti-imperialist policies. On the urgent democratic demands of the masses, some of which we have mentioned earlier, movements are to be organised by forging a united front of left and democratic forces. These are, no doubt, a historic necessity as a means to expose the objective limitation of the bourgeoisie, however well-meaning they may appear to be, before the masses. But here again, the lessons of United Fronts, particularly in West Bengal, should be borne in mind.

In West Bengal, the United Front got tremendous mass backing no doubt, but the Front suffered from two basic weaknesses from the very beginning, as has been shown in the brilliant analysis of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, our leader and

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Unity of Left and Democratic Forces Most Vital to Fulfil Some Urgent Democratic Tasks

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teacher and one of the foremost Marxist thinkers of the age.

Firstly, such United Front had mass backing not on the basis of higher standard of class consciousness but as a popular expression of an alternative to the ruling Congress in the bourgeois-parliamentary sense. Secondly, the leadership of the Front rested on a petty bourgeois parliamentary party masquerading as a 'Marxist' party due to its sheer organisational strength. Notwithstanding the distinct ideological political superiority of the SUCI, the real revolutionary party within the Front, it had not the requisite organisational strength to such an extent as could enable it to steer the Front clear out of various sorts of opportunism which weakened the Front and ultimately disrupted it, much to the glee of the ruling class.

So, the historic objective of the United Front of left and democratic forces can only be fulfilled if it is led by a genuine working class party. This is an important lesson never to be missed for a moment, as Comrade Ghosh has rightly reminded us.

Now to the question as to why, in spite of assured overwhelming majority in the poll, the national bourgeois ruling party in Bangladesh did not hesitate to rig the election and even to launch armed attacks against the opposition parties, throwing to the winds all its formal commitments to maintaining parliamentary norms and practices? Does this fact prove the absence of national bourgeois character of the ruling party as is being suggested by the 'ultra-left' opinions? Again, does it also prove the correctness of the expectation of 'bourgeois socialism' of Swedish model to emerge in Bangladesh as may be the dream of Professor

Muzaffar Ahmad and his Party? No. Certainly not.

Elaborating on the teachings of Marxism-Leninism in the post-Second World War situation, Com. Shibdas Ghosh has shown: "The growing tendency of fascisation in some of the economically and militarily weak capitalist countries in Asia and Africa and the establishment of military and fascist dictatorship in some other countries proves the incorrectness of the old postulation according to which, for fascism to raise its head, is needed a highly developed capitalist economy suffering from severe want of market and strong military might" (*Call of the Hour—Socialist Unity* - July 1, 1962)

In the era of finance capital and moribund capitalism fascism is the last prop of capitalism. According to Comrade Ghosh, in view of the unprecedented crisis in the world capitalist system, in order to fulfil the sole object of capitalistic development of the economy in the shortest possible time, even in the backward capitalist countries, one can see, the same process of concentration of private capital, development of state capital, fusion of the two into state monopoly capital and reducing to the minimum the mutual competition between individual capitalists through planning etc.

Fascism, as Comrade Ghosh has rightly cautioned us, is far from being simply naked torture as has been the conventional notion down from the days of Dimitrov's thesis. "Fascism", Comrade Ghosh has shown, "adopts a dual policy of suppression and persuasion. Its aim is not so much to ruthlessly suppress the mass force as to win it over to its side as volunteers willing to carry

out fascist plans and programmes for national reconstruction". And for this purpose of confusing the masses on a national scale, ideas of "class harmony" "unity of all classes" "supra-class national interests" are advocated by the fascists. What the bourgeoisie want is a concrete embodiment of such ideas in a 'national hero' whose charisma, they sedulously find up.

As such, parliament which is "a historically conditioned bourgeois political institution, a superstructure of the basis of the capitalists society", which grew and developed in an era of free competition of capitalism as the champion of individual liberty, equality and fraternity is fast losing its relevance in a bourgeois society where state monopoly capitalism as the economic base is the order of the day. And state monopoly capitalism is the economic foundation of fascism.

Does this analysis lead anyone to the erroneous conclusion that there is no

historic need of painstaking struggle along with the left democratic forces for realising the relative democratic rights and freedom to secure the ultimate objective of building up the revolutionary movements in the Country? To cling to this grossly mistaken idea will be nothing but fatalism which is alien to the soul of Marxism-Leninism. For, we can not forget the immortal teachings of Comrade Lenin that, "Marxists know that democracy does not abolish class oppressions but only makes the class struggle clearer, broader, more open and sharper; and this is what we want. * * *

"The more democratic the system of government is, the clearer it will be to the workers that the root of the evil is not the lack of rights but capitalism."

But...."unless those rights are proclaimed, unless a struggle for immediate rights is waged, unless the masses are educated in the spirit of such a struggle, socialism is impossible".

(A Caricature of Marxism—Lenini)

Peasants Urged to Unite Under Banner of KKMf

71-Member District Council Formed in Purulia

(From Our Correspondent)

Purulia (West Bengal) March 26. The Second conference of the Purulia District Paschim Banga Krishak-o Khet Mazoor Federation (KKMF) was held here on March 21 and 22 amidst great enthusiasm under the presidentship of Comrade Sadhu Banerjee, President of the district KKMf.

The inaugural session was held on March 21 at Rash Maidan. The main speaker, Comrade Subodh Banerjee, member of the Central Committee of SUCI and President, West Bengal State

Committee of the KKMf, in course of his two-hour long speech dealt elaborately on the burning problems of the poor peasantry and agricultural labourers of the country and showed how the anti-people policies of the ruling Congress Government are helping the jotedars and capitalists to amass huge wealth at the cost of the poor.

He explained how the ruling Congress, through its so-called progressive measures, was actually laying the foundation stone of fascism in

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CPM-Congress Alliance in Tirur Municipal Election in Kerala

Reports of Congress-CPI(M) understanding in Tirur Municipal election in Kerala have been circulated in a section of the Press. The CPI(M) maintained complete silence over this issue until the election was over. Mr. E.K. Imbichi Bava, a former Minister and the leader of the CPI(M) in Malappuram district, even tried to explain it away by saying that the understanding was only between individual candidates and not at party level.

It was only after the election was over and the CPI(M)-backed Congress Candidate was miserably defeated, that the CPI(M) State Secretariat found time to say that it was directing its Malappuram district Committee to correct any deviation from the party's basic anti-Ruling Front-Congress policy and to take suitable action against those responsible for it. (Reported

in **Hindusthan Standard** dated **18th March '73**).

Sri Promode Das Gupta and Sri Jyoti Basu, the two Central Committee members of the CPI(M) have also stated that there was no Front with the ruling Congress in Tirur Municipal election and those who flouted the party stand would face disciplinary action.

But it is queer to note that all these statements are being issued after the election

was over and the CPI(M)-backed Congress candidate was defeated. During the whole period, right from the time of filing nomination paper to the last date for withdrawal of nomination paper and also during the whole period of election campaign when the identity of the candidate as a prominent Congressman was distinctly known, the CPI(M) maintained indiscreet silence. So, will it be wrong to conclude that the post election spurts of statements denying the alliance with the Congress and also about the disciplinary actions against the erring cadres were only meant to save face and wash off hands from the charges of the alliance with the Congress when the Congress candidate supported by the CPI(M) was defeated? Surely the CPI(M) can not accept defeat in election as well as loss of reputation as an anti-Congress force at the same time! So, is it not 'pragmatic' to deny the charge of alliance with the Congress when no corresponding benefit from such alliance in the form of electoral victory can be reaped?

This is sheer opportunism. On the one hand, the leaders of the CPI(M) are crying hoarse about the semi-fascist terror of the Congress and on the other, such alliance with the Congress (Contd. to page 5)

KKMF Conference in Purulia

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the country. Comrades Yakub Pailan, General Secretary of the West Bengal KKMF, Kenaram Mandal, Secretary, Purulia District KKMF, Sailen Bauri, Dulal Hembram, Haripada Bauri, G.P. Karan and Batul Bhadra, leaders of the district KKMF, also spoke at the open rally.

The delegates session, held on March, 22 at Haripada Sahitya Mandir, Purulia, adopted resolutions on the recent law enhancing land revenue in West Bengal, the anti-Adivasi forest policy of the

Congress Government, the worsening condition of agricultural labourers, repression of the jotedar-police combine, acute unemployment problem in the district, the acute food and drinking water crisis, the rising prices of essential commodities and adulteration in food, medicine, etc.

Com. Nihar Mukherjee, Secretary, West Bengal State Committee of the SUCI, addressed the session and urged upon the delegates to build up revolutionary character and morality by correctly assimilating the teachings of Comrade

Shibdas Ghosh, our leader and teacher and one of the outstanding Marxist-Leninist leaders of the era, whose thoughts alone concretised the general principles of Marxism-Leninism in the specific circumstances prevailing in our country. He urged them to build up peasants' movement on correct and sound basis.

A 71-member strong District Council of the KKMF was formed with Com. Sadhu Banerjee as President, Comrades Dulal Hembram, Amar Ghosal and Jahar Banerjee as Vice-Presidents and Com. Kenaram Mandal as Secretary.

Comrade Subodh Banerjee addressing the open Session of Purulia KKMF Conference. Comrades Nihar Mukherjee, Yakub Pailan and other leaders of KKMF sitting on dias. Below: A section of large gathering.



Rally Condemns Firing on Gangmen

(From Our Correspondent)

Rajgangpur, March 28. SE Railway employees held a massive rally here recently to condemn the Security Forces' firing on gangmen in Himgiri Rly. Station. The demonstrators paraded the main street of the town and later assembled at the Railway station yard.

The meeting was addressed among others by Comrade S. K. Qasim, a prominent trade union leader and SUC organiser.